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CORTRIGHT PRESENTS UNDERGRADUATE PEACE AWARD



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David Cortright, director of policy studies at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, visited the Mershon Center today to speak with Ohio State faculty and students as well as bestow the first Undergraduate Peace Award on two students.



In his talk “Winning Without War: Human Security Strategies for the 21st Century,” Cortright argued that the principles of nonviolence and human security offer realistic options for addressing contemporary security challenges and are superior to “old war” strategies for enhancing peace and promoting international cooperation.

His address can be viewed as a streaming video in [Windows Media](#) or [RealPlayer](#), or downloaded as a [mobile version](#).

Cortright has written widely about nonviolent social change, nuclear disarmament, and the use of multilateral sanctions and incentives as tools of international peacemaking. The author or editor of 17 books, most recently *Ending Obama's War* (Paradigm, 2011) and *Towards Nuclear Zero* (Routledge, IISS, 2010), he also is the editor of *Peace Policy*, the Kroc Institute's online journal. He blogs at [davidcortright.net](#).

After his presentation, Cortright stayed on to present the first Undergraduate Peace Award, in a ceremony organized by the Peace Studies Society at Ohio State. The society named Balpreet Kaur and Hana Strickland as the 2013 recipients of this award for their contributions to peace and justice work.

Balpreet Kaur, a sophomore studying neuroscience and psychology, was nominated for the Undergraduate Peace Award because of her contributions to religious dialogue and interfaith understanding. Her promotion of tolerance was put to a personal test last year when a student secretly captured a photo mocking her facial hair and posted it on the popular website Reddit.com. The photo soon went viral when Kaur, a baptized Sikh, responded benevolently to cruel comments mocking her body and faith. Her graceful response, which explained the sacredness of the body in the Sikh faith, garnered thousands of responses from around the world and was posted on sites such as Jezebel, The Guardian, and Huffington Post. At Ohio State, Kaur is a part of the executive board of the Better Together team, president of the Sikh Student Association, and a Humanities Scholar.

Hana Strickland is a junior majoring in political science and international studies with a minor in Spanish and Portuguese. Since the age of 9, Strickland has participated in the Columbus International Summer Villages Program (CISV), which promotes peace education through cross-cultural understanding and global friendship. Through CISV, Strickland has attended programs in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Jonkoping, Sweden; and Quito, Ecuador. She has also staffed local programs in Columbus and Cincinnati. She is now the national junior representative for CISV USA, the highest youth position in the organization.

It was through these programs that Strickland was inspired to pursue a career in peace education. She currently interns at the Columbus International High School, where she has been developing curriculum and activities that explore topics on peacemaking and peacebuilding, direct cultural/structural violence, and positive and negative peace.

Strickland was chosen as a 2013 Undergraduate Peace Award recipient because of her work in promoting peace education and curriculum. “I truly believe that education is the key to creating a more peaceful campus, community and world,” she said. “In order to become more peaceful and break down barriers of injustice, intolerance, violence, and discrimination, we must first understand why things are the way they are and what are the best ways to resolve them.”


The Peace Award was created by undergraduate students -- for undergraduate students. Students applied or were nominated through an online application process in which they were asked to describe their contributions to peace in the local and global

community. The award, supported by the Mershon Center and Central Ohioans for Peace, provides students with a \$500 scholarship for tuition and fees.

Photo:

Peace scholar David Cortright (third from right) presented the Undergraduate Peace Award to students Hana Strickland (far left) and Balpreet Kaur (second from right) during a ceremony organized by the Peace Studies Society at Ohio State. Also in attendance were (back row left to right) Christopher Gelpi, Chair in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution; John Carlame, peace studies coordinator; David Jehnsen, chair of the Institute for Human Rights and Responsibilities; (front row left to right) Briana Stinson, communications chair for the Peace Studies Society; Hannah Bezeredi, president of the Peace Studies Society; and Mershon Center Director Craig Jenkins.

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